

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 11330 101234Z

47

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-10 ISO-00 FEAE-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02

SS-15 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06

PRS-01 OMB-01 SAM-01 /076 W
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R 101120Z SEP 75

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6136

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

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GENEVA FOR SAUNDERS

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ENRG, LE

SUBJECT: PUBLIC FEELS IMPACT OF GASOLINE SHORTAGE

REF: BEIRUT 11303

1. AS GASOLINE STOCKS AT INDIVIDUAL STATIONS AND AT
STORAGE IN DORA (JUST NORTH OF BEIRUT) ARE BEING
EXHAUSTED, PUBLIC IS INCREASINGLY FEELING THE IMPACT
OF THE LACK OF DELIVERIES FROM IPC'S REFINERY AT
TRIPOLI. NORMAL CONSUMPTION IS ESTIMATED AT
103 MILLION LITERS DAILY AND MEDRECO REFINERY AT
ZAHRANI CAN PRODUCE ONLY AROUND 450,000. MEDRECO
PRODUCTION IS BEING PROPORTIONED AMONG COMPANIES
ACCORDING TO MARKET SHARE. IN BEIRUT PRIVATE TRAFFIC
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PAGE 02 BEIRUT 11330 101234Z

IS DIMINISHING, AND TAXIS AND SOME GAS STATIONS ARE

RAISING PRICES. PRESS REPORTS INDICATE THAT OUTSIDE OF BEIRUT, ESPECIALLY IN BEKAA VALLEY, LITTLE GASOLINE IS AVAILABLE AT ALL.

2. MINISTER OF INDUSTRY AND PETROLEUM TWEINI AT A PRESS CONFERENCE YESTERDAY TOOK OPTIMISTIC VIEW THAT GASOLINE NEEDS CAN BE MET IF ALL WILL COOPERATE AND ANNOUNCED THAT HE HAD ASKED THE ASSISTANCE OF THE QUASI-OFFICIAL CONSUMER PROTECTION AGENCY IN ORDER TO HELP MINIMIZE GASOLINE PRICE GOUGING. MINISTER'S OPTIMISM SEEMS LARGELY BASED ON IMPENDING ARRIVAL OF TANKER THURSDAY AFTERNOON.

3. MOBIL OIL OFFICIALS, WHO HAVE BEST INFORMATION ABOUT LOCAL SUPPLIES, TAKE A LESS OPTIMISTIC VIEW OF AVAILABILITY OF GASOLINE. TANKER DUE TO ARRIVE THURSDAY AFTERNOON COULD PROBABLY HAVE DRAFT TOO DEEP TO UNLOAD AT MOBIL PORT AT DORA, THUS PRECLUDING DIVERSION OF THE TANKER FROM TRIPOLI. MOREOVER, THE TANKER'S 5,000 METRIC TONS OF GASOLINE, WHICH MUST BE DILUTED FROM 98 TO 96 OCTANE, CAN NOT BE DELIVERED TO FILLING STATIONS BEFORE SUNDAY OR MONDAY. MOBIL ESTIMATES THAT THERE WILL BE VERY LITTLE GASOLINE AVAILABLE AFTER FRIDAY.

3. IPC REFINERY IN TRIPLI, ALTHOUGH IT HAS CONTINUED TO PRODUCE DURING CRISIS, HAS NOW SHUT DOWN BECAUSE IT HAS REACHED STORAGE LIMITS. HOWEVER, IPC HOPES TO EXPORT GAS OIL SO AS TO MAKE ROOM FOR MORE GASOLINE SO THAT IT WILL BE AVAILABLE TO MEET STRONG DEMAND EXPECTED WHEN TRIPOLI SITUATION ALLOWS NORMAL DELIVERIES.
GODLEY

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